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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004900

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: GOI ON TURKEY'S EU CANDIDACY

REF: STATE 188078

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MC TOM COUNTRYMAN. REASON:1.5 (B)(C).

1. (C) ON OCTOBER 4 THE MFA'S DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS PAOLO PUCCI TOLD POL MINISTER COUNSELOR THAT WHILE ITALY RECOGNIZED THE REFORMS PUT IN PLACE RECENTLY BY THE
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TURKISH LEGISLATURE, IT WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SEE MORE PROGRESS, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. IN RESPONSE TO USG VIEW (REFTEL), HE SAID THAT THE GOI IS ENCOURAGED BY WHAT IT SEES AS PROGRESS ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT THE GOI WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO PROMOTE TURKEY'S EU CANDIDACY, BUT THAT THE REALITY WAS THAT THERE WERE OTHERS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WHO WERE LESS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT TURKEY'S CANDIDACY.

2. (C) PUCCI'S VIEW IS THAT THE BEST TURKEY COULD HOPE FOR PRIOR TO THE COPENHAGEN SUMMIT WOULD BE A STATEMENT RECOGNIZING PROGRESS TO DATE AND URGING THE GOT TO IMPLEMENT THE REFORMS LEGISLATED. THIS APPROACH WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE, CONTINUED PUCCI, WITHOUT THE PRESSURE OF A DEADLINE TO MEET EU STANDARDS.

3. (C) POL-MC HAD EARLIER DELIVERED THE SAME POINTS ON TURKEY TO PM (AND ACTING FM) BERLUSCONI'S DEPUTY DIPLOMATIC ADVISER, CESARE RAGAGLINI, WHO REPLIED THAT THE GOI APPRECIATED THE US ARGUMENTS MORE THAN MOST IN THE EU AND WANTED TO PROMOTE TURKEY'S CANDIDACY. HE NOTED THAT GERMANY MAY BE A BIGGER OBSTACLE THAN GREECE IN MOVING FORWARD.
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